

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. JEFFERSON led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 58. Concurrent resolution welcoming First Minister Dr. Ian Paisley and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness of Northern Ireland to the United States.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize up to five 1-minute speeches on each side.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NBA COACH AVERY JOHNSON

(Mr. JEFFERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate one of Louisiana's favorite sons, NBA coach Avery Johnson, on the occasion of his receiving an honorary doctorate degree from his alma mater, Southern University, at its upcoming fall commencement.

Born in New Orleans, Avery Johnson has known success at every level of basketball. In 1983 he led the St. Augustine High School Purple Knights to an undefeated season culminating with a Class 4A Louisiana State championship. He would go on to star on the Southern University Jaguars basketball team, setting NCAA Division I records for both season and career averages in assists that still stand today.

In 1988, Avery Johnson began his career in the NBA, where he would spend 16 seasons. Once again he found success with the San Antonio Spurs by taking them to their first NBA title in 1999 over the New York Knicks.

Presently, Avery Johnson serves as the head coach of the Dallas Mavericks, where his star has only continued to shine brighter. Now in his third full season as coach, he has led the Mavericks to their first Western Conference title, been named 2006 NBA Coach of the Year, and won 150 games faster than any other coach in NBA history.

Through his high achievement in sports and service to the community, Avery Johnson continues to leave a mark on the world, of which we are all very proud.

FUNDING OUR VETERANS

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, this is day 67. That's 67 days since the start of the new fiscal year and our veterans still do not have access to the increased funding provided in a bill that passed the House and Senate months ago and the President is waiting to sign.

The House-passed bill includes increased funding to improve access to medical services for all veterans, new initiatives for mental health and PTSD, increased funds for improved medical facilities and increased funding to assist homeless veterans, to name a few.

If the Democrats are acting in good faith and in the best interest of our Nation's veterans, why continue to delay this crucial funding?

The Democrats have failed in their earlier effort to use funding for our veterans as a bargaining chip for billions in unrelated spending. Why continue to delay this bill?

There are few things more important than ensuring that this Congress provides all possible benefits and health care for our veterans. I'm calling on the Speaker to move this bill forward, and I call on all Americans to contact their Representatives and tell the Democratic leadership to send a clean veterans appropriations bill to the President now.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Energy Independence and Security Act before us later today. This landmark energy bill moves our Nation forward towards a new, brighter energy future. It promotes clean homegrown energy by requiring our utilities to produce 15 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2020. It reduces our dependence on foreign oil by raising fuel efficiency standards on our cars by 40 percent. With the price of oil nearing \$100 per barrel, this will save consumers billions of dollars. And it saves energy through energy-efficiency standards and incentives like the effort I led to promote the construction of energy-efficient commercial buildings.

These policies will create new jobs and build new American industries, while reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. And it is all paid for by re-

claiming \$21 billion in taxpayer subsidies from the oil and gas industry.

I urge support of this fiscally responsible, smart new energy policy that embraces American ingenuity, innovation, and leadership and moves America forward towards a cleaner, more secure future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JONI HERSCHDE

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Joni Herschede, a true icon of Cincinnati.

Joni understood the Second Congressional District. You see, she grew up in Portsmouth in rural southern Ohio, one of eight siblings. She came to Cincinnati in the 1960s where she met and married Mark Herschede. She will always be best known for her passion and generosity to this community.

Joni never forgot her humble beginnings. Whenever Joni got behind a cause or an issue, others always followed because they knew if you didn't follow, you might as well get out of the way because she would succeed.

It is nearly impossible to find an organization in southern Ohio to which Joni did not give her time or her energy. Her son Donald said, "Mother wasn't happy unless she was doing something for someone else."

Her true passion was the University of Cincinnati. As an avid Bearcats fan, Joni's hats and outfits always proudly displayed her beloved red and black. But that passion went beyond just trappings of her clothing. It went to the philanthropy that she did for the University of Cincinnati as well.

Mr. Speaker, southern Ohio and Cincinnati will always be grateful for the kindness that Joni showed to so many and to so many organizations, the arts, the zoo, education, and her beloved Bearcats.

Joni's life should paint a path for future generations. Joni's legacy of public service will not be easily surpassed.

May she rest in peace.

THE BUSH-CHENEY ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. The Bush-Cheney energy policy has led America to a dead end, increasing dependence on imported oil and price gouging by big oil companies.

The new direction in energy policy to be considered here today puts America on a new path to energy independence and sustainability. It will be great for American consumers, saving billions at the pump; our businesses; our economy. And it will be great for the environment.

But it will be even better for millions of Americans in rural counties across

America. This bill also includes funding for critical county school payments. 780 counties in 42 States will get critical funding for law enforcement, search and rescue, and struggling rural schools.

My district, the Fourth Congressional District of Oregon, will avert a disaster if this legislation is adopted.

I thank the Democratic leadership for leading us in a new direction on energy and fulfilling their commitment to rural counties.

The ball was dropped by the Bush administration and by the Republicans. We're taking it up for all America here today by passing this bill.

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF AYMAN NOUR

(Mr. WICKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the third anniversary of the imprisonment of Egyptian parliamentarian and presidential candidate Ayman Nour. He was jailed on charges of forgery during the 2005 presidential elections in Egypt.

Nour suffers from numerous health problems. He has been subjected to documented physical abuse and has been denied visitation rights afforded to other prisoners. His health condition continues to worsen.

Many Members of Congress stand in solidarity with Ayman Nour and respectfully call on President Mubarak to grant his unconditional release. December 10 is Human Rights Day, marking the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In honor of that day, the Egyptian Government should release Ayman Nour. This action would symbolize a recommitment to the inherent dignity of all people and to their equal and inalienable rights.

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, the United States Postal Service, and I use that term because that's their formal name, has announced that they're going to stop using, having vending machines at the post office. That means that Americans will not be able to go to the post office when they need to get a stamp this holiday season, tax time or whatever, and realize they need stamps and be able to go to the postal service to buy a stamp. It seems the U.S. Postal Service is taking service out of their name.

Older people can't just very easily decide to learn how to use the Internet or have an Internet and poor people don't either. The postal service says people can buy stamps online. They can call an 800 number. They can buy them by mail. But if you need something for an

immediate postage, if you don't have the Internet, if you're old, and it's difficult to stand in line because you're handicapped or disabled, this is a great disservice to America.

They say the machines aren't working. Well, Federal Express wouldn't do something like this. They'd improve the machines or find a new machine. And if the machines didn't work at Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola would buy new machines.

The United States Postal Service should be for service and for the customer and maintain the vending machines. I'm preparing legislation, and I'll be sending a Dear Colleague out, Mr. Speaker, and hope all will join us in putting service back in the USPS.

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THE TEDDY BEAR AND ISLAM

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in the third world country of Sudan, the government is controlled by the religion of Islam. Religious hard-liners were successful in prosecuting a British first grade teacher for insulting Mohammed. She was sent to jail. Her crime: her 7-year-old students named a class Teddy Bear "Mohammed," and that was supposedly an insult to the Prophet. The punishment could have been worse. She could have received 40 lashes. In fact, thousands of Sudanese citizens marched demanding the school teacher be executed for the insult!

Of course, the teacher never meant to insult Islam, but the truth was not an issue in her trial.

The Sudan, this is the same "righteous" government that is allowing ethnic cleansing and genocide of its own citizens in Darfur.

But thanks to two Muslim members of the British House of Lords who disagreed with the arrest, the school teacher, Gillian Gibbon, was pardoned after serving 8 days in jail.

This case is an example of what happens when government punishes people for violating a religious doctrine.

And, by the way, the Teddy Bear was originally so named to honor the great President Theodore Roosevelt.

And that's just the way it is.

SUPPORT THE ENERGY BILL

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support today's energy bill. This is the change we need, for America needs a reliable energy partner, one that is home grown.

This bill restores our Nation's independence and will help to secure our future. It will also stimulate our economy and protect our environment. It will allow for clean, renewable energy

and move us away from the dangerous dependency on Arabian oil. It will also decrease our imported oil by 2 million gallons per day. It will create jobs and strengthen our economy as we move towards efficient, clean, and renewable energy resources.

This bill answers the question whose side are we on. Do we stand with Big Oil and the past or do we stand with the future?

I stand with the future and will continue to fight to cut the price of energy and fight hard for the people of Northeast Wisconsin.

BUY PRODUCTS MADE IN THE USA

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, defective, unsafe products, toys with poisonous lead paint, American jobs going overseas lured by cheap labor and unfair trade practices, these issues concern every American. But all of us can take a stand this holiday season.

One way is that instead of judging products by cheap prices, look for quality and safety that comes with American products. This holiday season shoppers will be buying gifts made from all over the world, but let's make an extra effort to look for American products.

This Christmas check the label for "Made in the USA" and support jobs for hardworking Americans and American quality. "Made in the USA" may be the best gift ever this Christmas.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 6, ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 846 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 846

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 6) to reduce our Nation's dependency on foreign oil by investing in clean, renewable, and alternative energy resources, promoting new emerging energy technologies, developing greater efficiency, and creating a Strategic Energy Efficiency and Renewables Reserve to invest in alternative energy, and for other purposes, with Senate amendments thereto, and to consider in the House, without intervention of any point of order except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI, a single motion offered by the Majority Leader or his designee that the House concur in each of the Senate amendments with the respective amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. The Senate amendments and the motion shall be considered as read. The motion shall be debatable for one hour equally divided and controlled by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader or their designees.